

Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011
DRAFTED BY ARA:VPVAKY
APPROVED BY ARA:VIRON
S/STARNOFF

-----124544 061748Z /42

O 061643Z SEP 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 225453

NODIS
CHEROKEE ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT SAN OSE 3765 ACTION STATE SEPT 6.

QUOTE S E C R E T SAN JOSE 3765

NODIS
CHEROKEE

EO 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: NU
SUBJ: CARAZO AND NICARAGUA

REF: STATE 224586

1. SUMMARY: BASICALLY AGREEING WITH SUBSTANCE OF DEMARCHE, CARAZO
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HAS MOVED BACK TOWARD HIS INITIAL SUGGESTION OF CENTRAL
AMERICAN CHIEF OF STATE-LEVEL MEDIATION. HAVING NOW ARRANGED FOR
FONMIN CALDERON TO CONSULT WITH GENERALS PAZ, ROMERO AND LUCAS OVER
THE NEXT 48 HOURS, HE SEES HIMSELF EMBARKED ON A SCENARIO THAT
MAY NOT QUALIFY STRICTLY AS MEDIATION, BUT ONE THAT COULD PRODUCE
A SIMILAR RESULT. AS OPPOSED TO HIS MOOD ON SUNDAY, HE NOW BE-
LIEVES THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOMOZA MIGHT STEP DOWN, AND THAT

THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION MIGHT ACCEPT SOME INTERIM ARRANGEMENT. HE NOT ONLY CONSIDERS MUTUAL CONCERN FOR SUB-REGIONAL SECURITY TO BE THE PROPER UMBRELLA FOR NEGOTIATIONS, BUT INSISTS IT IS THIS CONCERN WHICH MIGHT BRING MOST PARTIES INVOLVED TOGETHER. HE PROPERLY CONSIDERS THE INITIATIVE HIS OWN, BUT INSISTS THAT ASSURANCES OF U.S. SUPPORT ARE CRUCIAL AND URGES THAT WE ACT IMMEDIATELY TO ADVISE THE GOH, GOES AND GOG THAT WE STAND BEHIND HIM. SIMILARLY, THOUGH THE TIMING APPEARS TO BE LESS URGENT, HE WOULD WELCOME OUR CONFIRMATION WITH PEREZ AND TURBAY OF THE SAME, BUT WOULD PREFER TO LEAVE TO US ALL THE NECESSARY CONTACT WITH LOPEZ PORTILLO. END SUMMARY.

2. CARAZO SAID THAT HE HAD NOW TALKED TO EACH OF THE THREE CENTRAL AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE INVOLVED IN THE CURRENT INITIATIVE AND TOLD THEM THAT HE WAS SENDING FONMIN CALDERON TO CONSULT WITH THEM REGARDING THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA. HE HAS TOLD CALDERON THAT HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN OBTAINING OTHER CA VIEWS ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN NICARAGUA SO MUCH AS THEIR THOUGHTS ON "HOW WE CAN PROTECT OURSELVES". HE SAID THAT CALDERON HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PROPOSE AN EVENTUAL MEETING OF THE CA CHIEFS OF STATE BUT THAT HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ATTENDING OR HOSTING AN EXPLORATORY MEETING. RATHER, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE A MEETING FOR WHICH SUFFICIENT ADVANCE WORK HAD BEEN DONE TO ASSURE THE MEETING'S OUTCOME. HE SAID THAT CALDERON HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO TELL THE OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE THAT IT APPEARED TO CARAZO THAT SOMOZA POSSIBLY WAS LOOKING FOR AN EXIT AND THAT THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICANS HAD TO HELP HIM FIND ONE

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WHILE THERE WAS STILL TIME FOR HIM TO LEAVE.

3. ASSUMING AGREEMENT, THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO DEAL WITH SOMOZA IN SOME QUICK AND QUIET WAY TO DETERMINE A CANDIDATE OR CANDIDATES ACCEPTABLE TO SOMOZA ABOUT WHOM NEGOTIATIONS COULD PROCEED OF NICARAGUA'S DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION (HE MENTIONED AGAIN SOME OF THE "TWELVE" AND CHAMORRO OF LA PRENSA, ETC.). THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A "MEDIATION", NAMELY THE INTENDED MEETING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN HEADS OF STATE WHICH IN EFFECT WOULD SERVE TO RATIFY SUCH A SELECTION. WHAT CARAZO REITERATED HE WOULD NOT FIND ACCEPTABLE WOULD BE A MEDIATION WHICH WAS "TO DISCUSS, NOT TO TRANSACT". I INTERPRET THIS CONCERN AS HIS DESIRE TO AVOID EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF BARGAINING WITH SOMOZA IN A SITUATION WHERE THE RESULTS WERE NOT PRETTY WELL PRE-DETERMINED.

4. WHETHER SUCH A SCENARIO COULD BE CARRIED THROUGH TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OR NOT, CARAZO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HEARTENED BY REACTIONS TO HIS FLOATING YESTERDAY THE PURPOSE OF CALDERON'S TRIP WITH NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR LACAYO. THE AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL REACTION TO CALDERON'S MESSAGE WAS ONE OF HORROR AND DISMAY, BUT ON SECOND THOUGHT HE PREFERRED THAT CALDERON GO WITH THAT MESSAGE RATHER THAN NOT GO AT ALL. LACAYO EVEN SUGGESTED INDIRECTLY A

POSSIBLE "CANDIDATE" TO REPLACE SOMOZA. CARAZO WAS NOT SURE, BUT FROM HIS DESCRIPTION IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE PABLO RENER VALLE, FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DESIGNATE NAMED BY THE NICARAGUAN CONGRESS IN MAY, 1978. CARAZO ALSO HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A CLOSE FRIEND AND BUSINESS COLLEAGUE IN MANAGUA, RENE LACAYO, A FIRST COUSIN OF SOMOZA, WHO HELD OUT HOPE FOR SOME KIND OF A TRANSACTION.

5. CARAZO HAS HAD FURTHER CONVERSATIONS WITH PEREZ TO URGE HIM TO LOWER HIS PITCH SO THAT SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE MIGHT EMERGE FROM FUTURE EFFORTS. PEREZ RESPONDED BY TELLING HIM NOT TO WORRY, THAT IF SOMOZA BOTHERS CO TA RICA HE IS READY TO COME TO HER AID. CARAZO SAYS THAT HE REPLIED TO THE EFFECT "IT IS EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, BUT I'M RIGHT HERE NEXT TO HIM". FOLLOWING THIS LAST CONVERSATION, CARAZO ALSO CALLED TURBAY TO ENLIST HIS SUPPORT

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IN TRYING TO CALM PEREZ DOWN.

6. CARAZO CONCURS COMPLETELY WITH THE NEED TO CAST ALL EFFORTS RE NICARAGUA AS ONES URGENTLY AND GENUINELY NEEDED TO PROTECT THE SECURITY OF CENTRAL AMERICA. HE ACCEPTS FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PATERNITY OF THE INITIATIVE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. AT THE SAME TIME AS HE HAS INSTRUCTED HIS FONMIN TO LET THE THREE HEADS OF STATE KNOW THAT HIS EFFORTS ENJOY THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE U.S., HE BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF CALDERON'S VISITS, TO LET PAZ, ROMERD AND LUCAS KNOW DIRECTLY FROM US BEFOREHAND THAT WE WILL BACK CARAZO IN THIS CENTRAL AMERICAN INITIATIVE. (IF DEPARTMENT AGREES, EMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA WILL NEED TO ACT EARLY A.M. SEPTEMBER 6, SAN SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA, THEREAFTER. FONMIN CALDERON, WITH WHOM I HAVE JUST SPOKEN, CONFIRMS SCHEDULE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. HE IS TRAVELING BY GOCR AIRCRAFT TO THE THREE CAPITALS: TEGUCIGALPA, A.M. SEPT. 6; SAN SALVADOR, P.M. SEPT. 6; GUATEMALA, A.M. SEPT. 7, RETURNING COMMERCIALLY FROM GUATEMALA THAT AFTERNOON.)

7. AS FOR VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA, CARAZO STATES THAT HE ALSO WOULD WELCOME U.S. ENDORSEMENT OF HIS EFFORTS. HE PLANS IN ANY CASE TO KEEP PEREZ AND TURBAY APPRISED, BUT HOPES WE WILL DO ALL THE INFORMING IN THE CASE OF LOPEZ PORTILLO. HE DID NOT RESPOND TO TORRIJOS.

8. AS THIS MESSAGE CAME OUT OF THE TYPEWRITER, PRESIDENT CARAZO CALLED TO INFORM ME THAT AMBASSADOR LACAYO HAD CONTACTED HIM AGAIN TO DROP THE NAME OF ANOTHER POSSIBLE "CANDIDATE", GON FORMIN QUINTANA. AT THE SAMZFTIME, LACAYO HAS ASKED THAT COSTA RICA NOT SUPPORT THE VENEZUELAN PROPOSAL FOR AN MFM, AS THIS WOULD INTERFERE WITH CALDERON'S MISSION. CARAZO REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT EVEN SEEN THE TEXT OF THE VENEZUELAN PROPOSAL AS YET, SO WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT. HE WOULD APPRECIATE OUR ADVICE ON THIS ASAP.

WEISSMAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, DEMARCHE, PRESIDENT, CAT-C, NEGOTIATIONS, CHEROKEE 9-6-78, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE225453
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: VPVAKY
Enclosure: REPEAT OF SAN JOSE 3765
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N780007-0446
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780997/aaaadcme.tel
Line Count: 175
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c06ffa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, ONLY
Reference: 78 STATE 224586
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1529495
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CARAZO AND NICARAGUA
TAGS: PPDC, PDIP, NU, US, CS, (CARAZO ODIO, RODRIGO)
To: BOGOTA CARACAS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c06ffa56-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014